

Emotion Coaching

Moments of BIG FEELINGS are hard. Knowing how to respond in a way that shows empathy and enables co regulation is hard. Keeping your emotions in check so that you can respond intentionally is hard. This little acronym from the book (How to talk so kids will listen, written by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish) is a helpful reminder of how we can respond to our children's BIG FEELINGS in a way that will show empathy, kindness all whilst helping them calm those BIG FEELINGS.

E – engaging with your child, using full attention. Sounds simple. When you think about how often we are attending to our children, whilst multitasking and carrying out other tasks, the amount we are completely present is limited. To show your child that you are with them, in the moment, you need to stop what you are doing, e.g. turn the TV off, turn to your child and away from the chore at hand, pull the car over and look towards your child.

A – acknowledging your child we often do this with minimal conscious effort when we are engaged with another. For our children, during tricky emotional moments, these signs of acknowledgement are very important. They show that we are present, and that we are listening and trying to understand them. Verbal signs of acknowledgement are things like 'ah ha...I hear you...I'm listening'.

R – Naming offering a word to the feeling being experienced by your child can be tricky, but also very useful. When children feel understood, noticed and cared for, it helps them to calm down, and regulate their emotions.

S – Satisfying their wishes through imagination children have a wonderful imagination, engaging their imagination can not only help engage a part of their brain that will work towards calming those big feelings, but it will also help show them that you understand.

"I can see how angry you. I'm sorry that you can't wear your favourite dress today because it's in the wash. I wish I had a magic wand, and I would quickly wash, dry and have it hanging ready for you in your cupboard".